



# RÍO HONDO COLLEGE

*25 Years of Distance Education at RHC*

## Distance Education Committee (DEC) - Minutes Regular Meeting: September 11, 2023 – 1:30-2:30 p.m. - Zoom

### Members Present:

✓	Caroline Durdella	✓	Carol Sigala	✓	Irene Truong
✓	Airek Mathews	✓	Eugene Blackmun	✓	Melanie Fierro
✓	Zulma Calderon		Jose Millan	✓	Shirley C. Isaac
✓	Gabriela Olmos	✓	Angela Medina-Rhodes	✓	Hank Fung
NA	Ann Tran		Angel Ho	✓	Scott Jaeggi
✓	Cynthia Neri-Lewis	✓	Lydia Llerena	✓	Kenn PiersonGeiger
✓	Abbie Perry	✓	Bianca Urquidi		
✓	Michelle Pilati	✓	Jennifer Tanaka-Hoshijo		

I.	Approval of Distance Education Committee Meeting Minutes – May 8, 2023	Dr. PiersonGeiger called for a motion to approve the minutes for the Distance Education Committee (DEC) Meeting dated May 8, 2023.  <b>Action:</b> Dr. Neri-Lewis moved to approve the minutes. Minutes were approved with no discussion.
II.	Introduction of New and Continuing DEC Team Members	Dr. PiersonGeiger introduced himself as the new Distance Education Committee Coordinator (DECO) and shared a brief background of his involvement in helping to launch the initial “Virtual College” at Rio Hondo College (RHC) in 1997, including a short PowerPoint presentation highlighting the early years of Distance Education (DE) at RHC.  Dr. PiersonGeiger introduced the new Assistant Dean, Distance Education, Dr. Airek Mathews, who previously served as Distance Education Manager at Compton College and has extensive experience as an instructional designer.

	<p>Dr. Mathews shared that RHC is slated to become a Teaching College as part of the California Virtual Campus (CVC) Exchange as of the second week of October 2023 and that this will allow students from other community colleges to cross-enroll in online courses at RHC through their <i>Canvas</i> account. He expressed thanks to the entire team that attended each meeting and helped make this possible.</p>
	<p>Dr. Mathews introduced Gabriela Olmos and Zulma Calderon as the new Distance Education Instructional Designers for the campus.</p> <p>Ms. Olmos and Ms. Calderon expressed thanks for being able to continue working with RHC faculty.</p> <p>Dr. Mathews provided information regarding a DE newsletter that will be sent out via email and requested that everyone review an attached survey related to Professional Development (PD). The surveys will be used to gather data from faculty on PD offerings to be provided each semester.</p> <p>Dr. PiersonGeiger introduced Jennifer Tanaka-Hoshijo as the continuing Peer Online Course Review (POCR) Coordinator.</p> <p>Ms. Tanaka-Hoshijo expressed her gratitude for continuing her service and working with the Distance Education (DE) team. She provided information in an email sent out to faculty interested in taking a 6-week POCR evaluation course and stated that RHC now has 30 quality badge courses with the CVC.</p> <p>Dr. PiersonGeiger brought up an issue related to DEC membership count. There are currently two different documents that address DEC membership: the By-laws, which reflect a proposed increase to the number of faculty on the DEC that was reported to Academic Senate (AS) 2 years ago but has yet to be voted on by AS, and the 2022-24 Governance Manual, which is currently being updated for the next 2024-26 cycle. There is a discrepancy between these documents related to how many faculty members are invited to be on the DEC, so all voting for this meeting will follow the <i>Governance Manual</i> recommendation.</p> <p>Dr. Miller provided an update on the status of the committee practices and mentioned that the suggested changes received</p>

	<p>from the committee chairs have been gathered and will be presented at the Planning and Fiscal Council meeting this Fall for review and approval before being presented for Board approval.</p>
	<p>Dr. PiersonGeiger clarified that requests for a faculty membership increase in the <i>Governance Manual</i> had been submitted by the previous DECO in Spring 2023 and opened the floor for discussion on this matter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Blackmun said he thought committee membership was not mandated to be a certain number but that an upper limit was set to allow for sufficient representation from each academic division.</li> <li>• Ms. Llerena added that part-time faculty would be allowed to participate as some divisions are smaller and would not have enough representation otherwise.</li> <li>• Dr. PiersonGeiger said the By-laws mention the committee will have 20 members made up of faculty, but he would check the balance between academic divisions for the next meeting.</li> <li>• Dr. Caroline Durdella commented that the decision to expand DEC membership may have been influenced by the pandemic and mentioned difficulty meeting quorum requirements if it expands.</li> <li>• Dr. Carol Sigala commented in agreement with Ms. Llerena’s comment.</li> <li>• Ms. Llerena mentioned that achieving a quorum has not been an issue for this committee.</li> </ul>
<p>III. DEC Agenda Building Process and Meeting Structure</p>	<p>Dr. PiersonGeiger requested input on the DEC agenda building structure and proposed topics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Blackmun mentioned that the previous DECO would handle creating the agenda and that any matters raised during the meeting would be discussed at the following meeting.</li> <li>• Ms. Tanaka-Hoshijo endorsed Mr. Blackmun’s comment and mentioned that the previous coordinator would also send out emails to DEC members prior to meetings to see if there were any issues that they felt should be on the agenda.</li> <li>• Mr. Jaeggi and Dr. Durdella added that there was also a “Goals” section in prior agendas where the DEC could set goals and follow up on their progress.</li> </ul>

<p>IV. DE-Related Professional Development</p>	<p>Dr. Mathews provided more information on the PD surveys that were going to be sent out and reminded members to complete them.</p> <p>Dr. PiersonGeiger asked the committee to email any goals or topics they would like to be added to the next meeting's agenda.</p>
<p>V. Course Merging Process</p>	<p>Dr. PiersonGeiger mentioned that there are some faculty concerns related to current college policies related to merging courses on Canvas. He asked Dr. Mathews to provide more insight into this matter.</p> <p>Dr. Mathews stated that currently, only combined courses and cross-listed courses can be merged. These restrictions are in place to ensure the college is complying with regulations and laws such as the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and maintaining student privacy. Dr. Mathews said he has been working on a proposed draft policy with Dr. PiersonGeiger in regard to a "Course Merging Process" and that feedback is welcome from the DEC to create a policy that can ensure legal compliance while helping faculty manage courses. He mentioned that the methodologies from other colleges were also considered in drafting this policy.</p> <p>Dr. PiersonGeiger and Dr. Mathews went over the proposed checklist of settings that faculty would need to change to merge their courses. Dr. PiersonGeiger mentioned that completion and verification of this checklist would be essential to this process and that the DEC is free to provide recommendations on this process. Dr. Mathews mentioned that a copy of these documents will be sent to all DEC members and explained how they can add their comments directly to the document.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dr. Durdella commented how these settings may facilitate or constrain student interaction and engagement should be factored into the policy. Dr. PiersonGeiger stated this would be the first concern the DEC would consider.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ms. Michelle Pilati requested clarification on how these settings related to things like assignments. Dr. Mathews clarified that the items on the checklist are being kept generic as it is meant for faculty who may not be familiar with every feature in <i>Canvas</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Dr. PiersonGeiger reiterated that the goal of the proposed “Course Merging Process and Checklist” is to reduce current restrictions on course merging while maintaining legal compliance, and he encouraged the committee to provide feedback to address this matter quickly.</p>
<p>VI. Pre- and Post-Term Canvas Access for Students</p>	<p>Dr. PiersonGeiger noted that the meeting was running behind schedule and proposed that a Special Meeting be scheduled in two weeks, in accordance with the By-laws, to provide the DEC time to review the course merging issues discussed and to allow for sufficient time to address the remaining agenda items. He also asked Dr. Miller to explain, for the record, the concerns related to granting students pre-term and post-term access to their courses on <i>Canvas</i>.</p> <p>Dr. Miller stated that students have raised concerns because they are seeing multiple courses in their <i>Canvas</i> accounts and are having issues with managing them. Faculty have also mentioned that students sometimes have unique circumstances when they need access to course materials early or after the final day of class, and they would like the flexibility to account for these instances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Durdella asked for clarification on what is being proposed as it is her understanding that students are not allowed to have early or late access to complete coursework.</li> <li>• Dr. Miller stated he would provide more clarification at the next meeting.</li> </ul>
<p>VII. Meeting Adjourned</p>	<p>Dr. PiersonGeiger adjourned the meeting and stated that a Special Meeting would take place on Monday, September 25, 2023.</p>